Nixon Vows To Restore Confidence

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ORLANDO, Fla., Nov. 17 (AP) — President Nixon vowed anew tonight to work for the restoration of "confidence in the White House and in the President himself."

He acknowledged that the job is a big one in view of the Watergate scandals but he intends to do it and believes he can succeed.

Mr. Nixon made the statement as he began an hour-long question-and-answer session with nearly 400 editors at the annual meeting of The Associated Press Managing Editors Association.

The first question, from APME President John Quinn of the Gannett Newspapers, recalled the words of Benjamin Franklin, who said the Founding Fathers had given the nation "a republic . . . if you can keep it."

Quinn asked whether, in view of the scandals afflicting the administration, the United States could keep that republic now.

"I would certainly not be standing here answering these questions unless I had a firm belief that we can keep this republic . . . that we must keep it . . ." the President said.

He said it must be preserved not only for America but for the world.

Mr. Nixon conceded that there are "those who wonder whether this republic can survive" Watergate. He said the scandal stemmed from the mistakes of his associates for which "I take responsibility."

He then said: "As long as I am physically able . . . I am going to work for the cause of peace . . . prosperity without war and without inflation and . . . to restore confidence in the presidency and the White House . . .

"It's a big job, but I think it can be done."

Mr. Nixon arrived at Orlando from his Key Biscayne, Fla., home about two hours before the news conference.

With a wave to about 150 military men and their dependents, Mr. Nixon stepped from his jetliner at McCoy Air Force Base after a 55-minute flight from Key Biscayne.

Shaking hands briefly, he talked with one person.

"We're with you," she said.

"Well, we're with you," the President replied.

He then headed by motorcade for a Disney World hotel, where he scheduled meetings

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with aides prior to the news conference.

Aides said Mr. Nixon spent much of the day studying a set of briefing books intended to prepare him for questions on issues ranging from Watergate to the energy crisis to the Middle East.

All three national television networks set aside an hour for the news conference, Mr. Nixon's first public question-and-answer sessions since he launched a campaign to "clear up . . . the Watergate matter once and for all."

Mr. Nixon flew to Key Biscayne Friday after a week-long series of private meetings with Republican congressman. He planned two more public appearances before returning to the White House Tuesday evening.

He will go to Macon, Ga., Sunday to participate in a joint celebration of the 90th birthday of retired Democratic Rep. Carl Vinson and the 100th anniversary of the Walter F. George Law School at Mercer University.

On Tuesday, he will stop in Memphis, Tenn., where Republican governors are meeting.

In arranging tonight's news conference, the White House barred questioning by Washington newsmen accompanying Mr. Nixon on his South[illegible]

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